

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 AID-05 HEW-04 L-03
SCA-01 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /071 W
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0201

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, BC
SUBJECT: ORGANIZATION OF REFUGEE ASSISTANCE IN BOTSWANA

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS AN OUTLINE OF THE GOB ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE FOR DEALING WITH REFUGEES. UPON ARRIVAL IN BOTSWANA ALL REFUGEES MUST INITIALLY REPORT TO THE POLICE. THEY ARE LATER INTERVIEWED BY REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. BOTSWANA COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES IS PRIMARY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATION WHICH COORDINATES EFFORTS OF UNHCR, BOTSWANA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, IUEF AND OTHERS. END SUMMARY.

1. BOTSWANA HAS ALWAYS CLEARLY STATED ITS POLICY OF PROVIDING TEMPORARY REFUGE FOR PERSONS FLEEING OPPRESSION. HOWEVER, GOB HAS BEEN EQUALLY DEDICATED TO MOVING SUCH REFUGEES ON TO OTHER COUNTRIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MANY OF THOSE ARRIVING IN BOTSWANA HAVE NO DESIRE TO STAY, PREFERRING TO TRAVEL ELSEWHERE FOR ACADEMIC OR MILITARY TRAINING. MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS ARE POSED BY THOSE WHO HAVE COME RECENTLY IN INCREASING NUMBERS WITH THE WISH TO REMAIN HERE.

2. PROCEDURES: WHEN A REFUGEE ARRIVES IN BOTSWANA, HE IS SUPPOSED TO REPORT TO THE POLICE FOR REGISTRATION. IF THE REFUGEE HAS ACCOMMODATION OR A SPONSOR, THE
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POLICE USUALLY RELEASE HIM UNTIL HE CAN MEET WITH VARIOUS GOB REFUGEE AUTHORITIES. HE MUST REPORT TO THE POLICE DAILY UNTIL HIS STATUS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. OCCASIONALLY, THE POLICE RETAIN SUCH PERSONS IN CUSTODY UNTIL THE LOCAL REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CAN MAKE A RECOMMENDATION RE THE PERSON'S STATUS TO THE APPROPRIATE GOB OFFICIAL (MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND

INFORMATION D.K. KWELAGOBÉ OR HIS DEPUTY, M.C. TIBONE, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT). ONE EFFECT OF THESE PROCEDURES UP TO NOW IS WORTH NOTING: THE GOB HAS BEEN ABLE TO ASSERT CONTROL OVER REFUGEES AND SEEK TO DEAL WITH THEM ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.

3. REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC): EACH OF THE NINE DISTRICTS IN BOTSWANA HAS AN RAC CHAIRED BY THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER. THE OTHER THREE OR FOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR PROMINENT PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. THE RAC INTERVIEWS A PROSPECTIVE REFUGEE AND ADVISES THE GOB (KWELAGOBÉ) WHETHER TO GRANT REFUGEE STATUS. EVEN IF REQUEST REJECTED, A PERSON IS USUALLY ALLOWED AT LEAST THREE MONTHS TO WIND UP AFFAIRS AND ARRANGE ON-WARD TRAVEL.

4. BOTSWANA COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES (BCR): THE UMBRELLA REFUGEE-HANDLING ORGANIZATION HERE IS THE BCR WHICH MEETS ONCE A MONTH TO DECIDE POLICY AND ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION LEVELS. THE BCR IS CHAIRED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT (TIBONE). OTHER BCR MEMBERS ARE THE GOB SECURITY OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE FUND (IUEF), AND TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BOTSWANA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL (BCC). THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) USUALLY ATTENDS BCR MEETINGS AS AN OBSERVER AND CAN CAST A DECIDING VOTE IF ONE OF THE FIVE MEMBERS IS ABSENT (SEE SEPARATE FOR DETAILS OF UNHCR ACTIVITIES IN BOTSWANA).
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5. CURRENTLY, THE BCR, THROUGH FUNDS PROVIDED PRIMARILY BY UNHCR, IS HELPING SOUTH AFRICANS, NAMIBIANS, ANGOLANS AND A FEW BASOTHO. THIS ASSISTANCE IS MAINLY IN THE FORM OF A P20 (DOLLARS 25) MONTHLY SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE (WHICH UNHCR PLANS SOON TO RAISE TO P30). NOTE: THE BCR DOES NOT SUPPORT THE RHODESIAN REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA WHOM IT CONSIDERS PRIMARILY A BRITISH PROBLEM. RHODESIANS ARE ASSISTED BY THE GOB, BCC (WHICH GETS FUNDS FROM THE ALL AFRICA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES) AND, TO A SMALL EXTENT, THE VARIOUS ZIMBABWE LIBERTATION MOVEMENTS. THESE RHODESIANS, WHOSE NUMBERS RECENTLY HIT AT ALL-TIME HIGH OF 860, ARE PROVING TO BE A SEVERE DRAIN ON THE GOB.

6. BOTSWANA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL (BCC): BCC MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF TEN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN FOUR URBAN CENTERS. INCLUDED ARE ANGLICANS, METHODISTS, CATHOLICS, LUTHERANS AND OTHERS. IN EARLY

1970'S, BCC DID MUCH OF THE WORK NOW DONE BY BCR BUT BEGAN TO PHASE OUT AFTER BCC REFUGEE OFFICER IN FRANCISTOWN RESIGNED IN MID-1973. BCC AT THAT TIME INFORMED GOB THAT IT WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A JOINT REFUGEE COMMITTEE BUT WAS NOT LONGER WILLING TO BE PRINCIPAL RELIEF ADMINISTRATOR. THIS LED TO FOUNDATION OF BCR. HOWEVER, IN ADDITION TO PARTICIPATING IN AND DONATING TO BCR, BCC STILL GIVES AT LEAST SOME DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES. ONE INSTANCE OF WHICH WE AWARE WAS IN LATE 1976 WHEN BCC GAVE MUZOREWA ANC SOME FRANCISTOWN-LUSAKA AIR TICKETS.

7. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE FUND (IUEF): LOCAL IUEF REP IS DR. PHINEAS MAKHURANE, UBS LECTURER. ALTHOUGH IUEF DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN REFUGEE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, IT ASSISTS IN EDUCATION. WE ARE TOLD, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IUEF OFFICE IN LUSAKA HAS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY OR FOR WHOM. IUEF REP WAS IN GABORONE IN LATE DECEMBER ADMINISTERING APTITUDE TESTS FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 200 SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES TO BE OFFERED IN NIGERIA BY THE FMG.

8. AFRICAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE (AAI): AAI HAS AN OFFICE IN GABORONE. LOCAL REPS ARE MRS. JANET HERMANS, WIFE OF NATIONAL BANK GOVERNOR, AND MRS. DOREEN NTETA, CURATOR OF NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY. MRS. NTETA HAS ONLY RECENTLY REPLACED MRS. MOOKODI (WIFE OF NEW BOTSWANA AMBASSADOR TO US) AS LOCAL AAI EDUCATION ADVISOR. ALTHOUGH AAI CURRENTLY ASSISTING ABOUT 50 SOUTHERN AFRICANS IN U.S. UNIVERSITIES, MOST ARE NOT REFUGEES. ONLY A FEW ACTUAL REFUGEES ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE AAI-SPONSORED SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDENT PROGRAM. AAI PROVIDES NO MAINTENANCE OR LOCAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN BOTSWANA. HOWEVER, AAI PRESIDENT COTTER VISITED GABORONE IN EARLY DECEMBER AND, ACCORDING TO MRS. HERMANS, INFORMED TIBONE THAT AAI WISHES TO ASSIST GOB WITH ITS REFUGEE PROBLEMS. APPARENTLY GOB HAS NOT YET CONVEYED SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE REQUESTS TO AAI.

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9. NORWEGIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NORAD):
NORAD HAS ASSISTED RHODESIAN REFUGEES HERE IN THE PAST BUT
NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE. LAST YEAR NORAD GAVE GOB APPROXIMATELY
P12,000 FOR 192 FRANCISTOWN-LUSAKA AIR TICKETS. ONLY
STRICTURE ON THESE TICKETS WAS THAT THEY WERE NOT TO
BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR ANY ONE FACTION OF ANC BUT
INSTEAD SHOULD BE GIVEN ON FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED
BASIS.

10. COMMENT: THIS IS A RATHER DETAILED REPORT ON BACK-
GROUND AND CURRENT EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH REFUGEES IN
BOTSWANA. IT IS SUBMITTED BECAUSE WE BELIEVE, ON
BALANCE: (A) THAT GOB IS DOING ITS BEST TO HELP; (B)
THAT ITS RELIEF EFFORTS, ALTHOUGH CUMBERSOME AND OFTEN
SLOW, ARE THOROUGH, CONSCIENTIOUS AND GENERALLY ABOVE
CRITICISM; (C) THAT ITS RECORD UP TO NOW JUSTIFIES A
LARGE MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE GOB'S ABILITY TO
HANDLE SLIGHTLY LARGER NUMBERS OF REFUGEES; AND (D)
THAT EXISTING PROCEDURES SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
AND RESPECTED WHEN ESTABLISHING NEW ONES TO CARE FOR
LARGER NUMBERS OF REFUGEES AND BUILDING CAMPS TO
ACCOMMODATE THEM.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

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